

FRESHWATER WETLANDS

Freshwater wetlands are ecosystems that are distinguished by three basic characteristics:

- Recurrent, sustained saturation at or near the soil surface
- Hydric soils
- Water-tolerant vegetation

IMPORTANCE:

- Wetlands provide unique habitat for numerous threatened and endangered species
- Wetlands provide habitat for numerous species of animal life
- Wetlands provide conditions for numerous species of plant life
- Wetlands provide essential biological functions such as water filtration
- Wetlands provide flood control
- Wetlands provide an educational opportunity
- Wetlands receive regulatory protection under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act



Photo: NEBRASKAland Magazine /
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission



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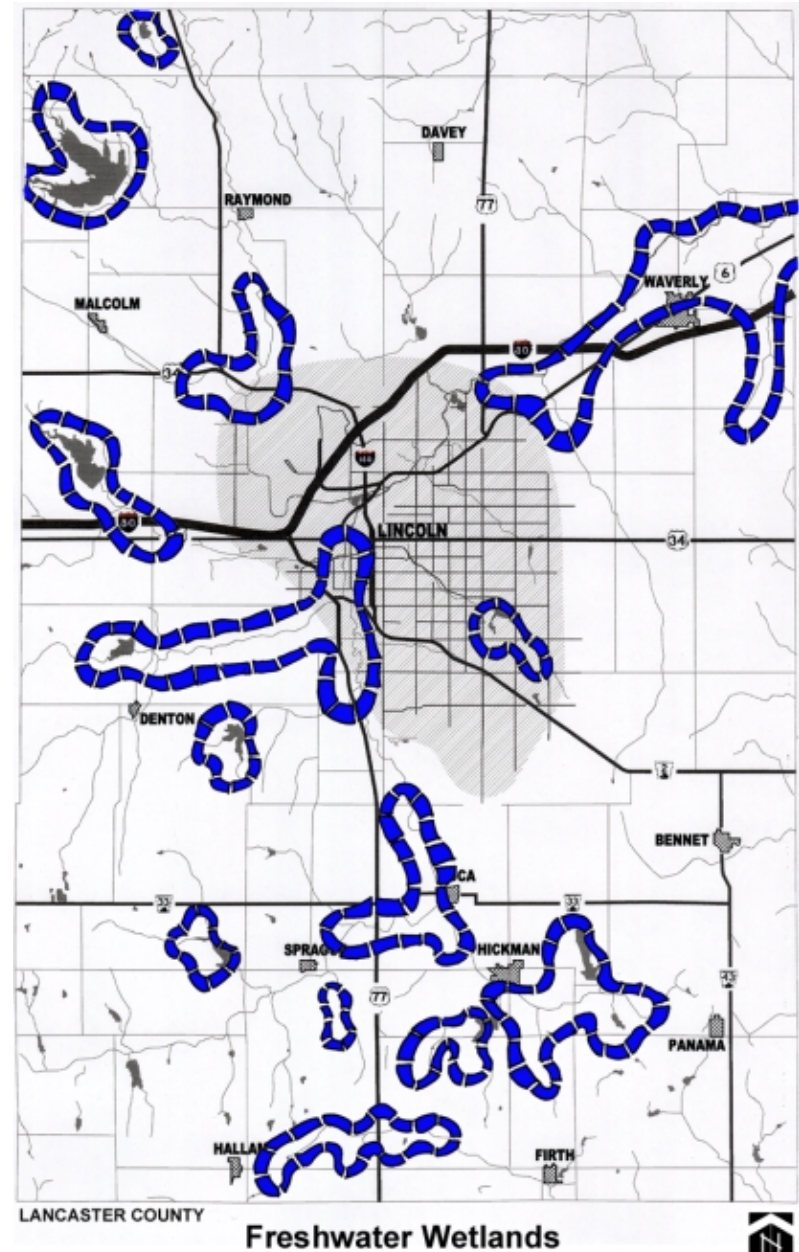
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LEGEND



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HUMAN IMPACT/THREAT:

- Wetlands are sometimes drained or filled and removed in the interest of development
- Wetlands can be damaged with the introduction of additional runoff or altered hydrology
- Wetlands are sometimes perceived as public health nuisances
- Wetlands are under-appreciated in Lancaster County



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PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

- Wetland banks should be considered
- Connectivity among adjacent or contiguous freshwater wetlands should be maintained
- Freshwater wetlands should be recognized and utilized as natural flood control areas
- Management of wetlands is desirable
- Education about wetlands is desirable
- Opportunities for conservation and restoration of wetlands exist
- Comprehensive thinking regarding watershed planning is required
- Buffers that vary from 50 to 200 feet in width are required at the perimeter of wetlands to reduce the impact of increased runoff, sedimentation and other pollutants
- Storm water management practices that consider both water quality and quantity should be implemented upstream from wetlands